

DID YOU
KNOW...

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians through a family member, friend or colleague at some point in their lives.
- 1 in 5 Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime.
- Mental illness affects people of all ages, educational and income levels, and cultures.
- A complex interplay of genetic, biological, personality and environmental factors causes mental illnesses.

The stigma or discrimination attached to mental illnesses presents a serious barrier, not only to diagnosis and treatment but also to acceptance in the community.

Sources:
The Report on Mental Illness in Canada, October 2002. E BIC 1998 (Health Canada 2002), Stephens et al., 2001

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Mental Health Employment Program

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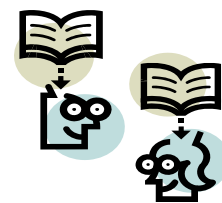
Upcoming Information Session:

Canada Revenue Presents Disability Tax Credit Information

Date: January 15, 2009

Time: 10:30 am to 11:30 am

Location: MHEP Office



Upcoming Fairs/Events:

Vancouver Education & Career Fair

Tuesday, February 3, 2009

Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre

9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

MHEP Clients, if you would like to attend the fair please call Minna at 604-596-5750 ext. 220 for free tickets.



Employer Recognition:

We would like to thank Pam, Leanne and Val at Safeway for being a supportive employer, looking beyond people's disabilities and seeing them for their strengths. Thank you all for your dedication to serving our community!

"What you guys are doing is amazing!" - Leanne, Safeway

SAFEWAY 
Ingredients for life.™

Step by Step, Making Dreams Come True



Written by: Colleen R. Hendriksen

It wasn't easy as it took two attempts and the encouragement of his Supported Independent Living (SIL) Worker at OPTIONS: Services to Communities Society to get Ross to meet with staff at the Mental Health Employment Program (MHEP). It was June 2, 2008 and Ross called to inform staff that he would not be able to make it to his first appointment because of the anxiety attack he just experienced. Staff at the other end offered to pick Ross up to simply go for a coffee and Ross agreed. This allowed the worker and Ross to meet and build rapport as it was an environment that Ross was comfortable in - a less formal, less professional environment.

Over the course of several appointments, Ross revealed that prior to his mental health taking a dive in the 90's, he had a family, a successful career where he was the manager of a farm in the Fraser Valley, and led an exciting, active life. Ross became too sick to work and was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. He has been on the road to recovery ever since. There have been many hiccups and setbacks along the way, including 7 hospitalizations back in the mid 90's. But for the past 8 years Ross has been stable. He has a regular, structured weekly routine, broken up by the occasional fishing trip or visit to the Park; his medication is well managed and he takes it

according to the prescription; he has excellent supports in place including: his wonderful Mother, his Supported Independent Living (SIL) worker from OPTIONS and his Mental Health Therapist.

When Ross came to the MHEP his goal was to make a couple of bucks to buy a car so he could have some "freedom!" He said he was tired of watching Jerry Springer and was feeling healthy enough to work. After some career exploration with his MHEP Employment Worker, Ross determined that he wanted a job at a grocery store stocking shelves or doing the ordering, a realistic goal considering his extensive work at a grocery store in the past.

Ross was seeking practical help. He needed a resume and had to be able to submit it "electronically" (NOT an easy task for a 50 year old who was not aware of how to turn on a computer!). In his grocery store days it was all pen and paper, and he certainly didn't need computer skills back on the farm. But he did it all, for 1 hour a week - and a smoke break each time - for 4 months straight. He learned how to turn the computer on, how to do an on-line job search, he typed out his resume and cover letter in a "chicken peck" fashion BUT by golly he did it! He even got an

email account and sent his resume out to employers electronically.

And in the end it all paid off! Thanks to Pam, Leanne & Val, the supportive and understanding hiring staff at Safeway, who were willing to take a chance and see Ross for his strengths, on October 1, 2008 he could say: **"I GOT A JOB!"** and to this day: Jan 10, 2009 he is still working at Safeway and has saved enough money to buy a car. The crew he works with know about his health condition as he is open and shares his stories; in fact, the crew "get a real kick out of him". Aside from the leg pain from being out of shape, Ross is enjoying his job and continues to work full-time hours even though the income is more than his allowable earnings of \$500. He says he will do this as long as he's capable as it is good exercise, it helps him keep a good routine, plus it keeps the employer happy. The Hiring Manager, Val says he has a job as long as he wants one!

Never give up hope.

Sincerely,

*The Staff
at MHEP*

Recent Headlines:

10 Things to Improve

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/servlet/story/RTGAM.20081126.wmhlurie1126/BNStory/mentalhealth/>
Steve Laurie, executive director of the Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, presents his list of top 10 things needed to improve mental health care in Canada. The list includes access to employment, mental health services, and reduction of stigma and discrimination.

Financial Crisis May Increase Mental

<http://www.nationalpost.com/life/health/story.html?id=22a05804-fdba-4761-930b-084f23da7425>

The World Health Organization cautions that the global financial crisis is likely to cause increased mental health problems, and even suicides as people struggle to cope with poverty and unemployment.

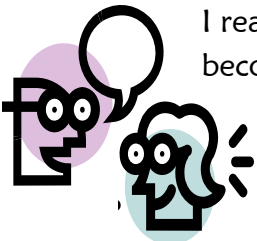
Globe & Mail Documents

Costs of Mental Illness in Breakdown Series

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/breakdown>

In Breakdown, The Globe and Mail documents the enormous, unaddressed cost of mental illness to Canadian individuals, families and society. The series closes with a search for solutions.

What Our Clients Have to Say



I really appreciate the support. I've lost most of my family and friends support since becoming ill And it feels nice to know that someone out there cares". B.V.

"Thank you so much for being patient with me".

"I like the job more than I thought I would". R.W.

Please come and visit us at:
108 - 6840 King George Hwy., Surrey, BC
Tel. 604-596-5750, Fax. 604-596-5799

This program is generously supported by
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We're on the Web!
www.options.bc.ca



*At Christmas,
sometimes the best gift...*

The Kelsey

*...is the gift of friendship.
Warmest holiday wishes.*

*Thank you so much for all of your help
and support, and all of the extra things
that you have done for me. (I know it sucks
getting up so early). I couldn't have
done any of this without you!*

Hope you have a great Christmas.

Mental Health Employment Program (MHEP)

A program of

